

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 01077

DEPARTMENT PASS TREASURY FOR RYSS, EXIM BANK FOR MINIKIES

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS, EFIN, ECON, GW
SUBJECT: FRG VIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVING ON
UNILATERAL DECLARATION ON OFFICIAL SUPPORT
FOR EXPORTS

1. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH GEHRING OF ECONOMICS
MINISTRY AND JAECKEL OF FINANCE MINISTRY -- HEADS OF
EXPORT CREDIT AND GUARANTEE OFFICES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE
MINISTRIES -- FRG OFFICIALS PAINTED A RATHER GLOOMY
PICTURE REGARDING SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK FOR ADDITIONAL
PROGRESS IN HARMONIZING TERMS AND CONDITIONS ON
OFFICIAL SUPPORT FOR EXPORTS.

2. GEHRING EXPRESSED THE OPINION, ECHOED IN THE MEETING
WITH JAECKEL, THAT WHILE THE FRG WAS FIRMLY IN FAVOR
OF INCREASING THE SCOPE OF THE UNILATERAL DECLARATIONS
ANNOUNCED LAST SUMMER, THIS AVENUE IS NOW BLOCKED.
FIRST, HE SAID, BECAUSE OF CONTINUING UNCERTAINTIES
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INVOLVED IN THE COMPETENCY ISSUE DISPUTE BETWEEN
THE EC COMMISSION AND THE EUROPEAN ISSUERS OF UNILATERAL
DECLARATIONS AND SECOND, BECAUSE THE FRENCH HAVE
ACQUIESED TO THE COMMISSION'S DEMAND THAT INDIVIDUAL
COUNTRIES DESIST FROM FURTHER TALKS IN THIS AREA. THUS,
ALTHOUGH THE UNILATERAL DECLARATIONS MAY CONTINUE
TO PROVIDE DE FACTO GUIDELINES ON OFFICIAL SUPPORT

FOR EXPORTS, GEHRING SEES SCANT HOPE FOR USING THIS
DEVICE TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS.

3. THE ONLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE PRESENTLY, ACCORDING
TO FRG OFFICIALS, IS TO PLACE THESE NEGOTIATIONS
UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE EC COMMISSION. THE FRG HAS
PLEDGED ITS SUPPORT FOR THIS, BUT CONTINUES ON PRINCIPLE
TO DEFEND ITS PEROGATIVE TO ACT ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.
GEHRING INDICATED THAT THE MATTER WILL BE DISCUSSED AT
THE UPCOMING EC MINISTERIAL, WHICH IS TENTATIVELY
SCHEDULED FOR EARLY FEBRUARY.

4. EVEN IF THE EC COMMISSION IS DESIGNATED THE ULTIMATE
AUTHORITY IN THIS AREA AS NOW SEEMS LIKELY, GEHRING
FORESEES DIFFICULTIES. THE FRENCH, HE SAYS, SEEM
EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO GIVE UP THEIR FLEXIBILITY.
FRENCH RESISTANCE MAY, THEREFORE MAKE CONCLUDING A
MEANINGFUL INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT, EVEN WITH THE
COMMISSION AS THE EUROPEAN SPOKESMAN, A LONG AND
DIFFICULT PROCESS.

5. GEHRING INDICATED THAT MOVING THE FRENCH WOULD
REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM OTHER EC MEMBER
COUNTRIES AND THAT THE FRG WOULD BE A FIRM SPOKESMAN
FOR MORE STRINGENT CONDITIONS. GEHRING WENT ON TO SAY
THAT PRIVATELY HE HAD HOPED THAT THE LEGAL PROCESS
WOULD BE TAKEN TO CONCLUSION SO THAT THE COMMISSION
COULD IF NEED BE DICTATE AN EC NEGOTIATING POSITION
RATHER THAN HAVE TO ACT ON THE BASIS OF THE LOWEST
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COMMON DENOMINATOR WITHIN THE EC. GEHRING THOUGHT
THE PAST LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMISSION WAS DISPOSED
TO DO THIS BUT WAS NOT SURE THAT THE INCOMING PERSONNEL
WOULD WANT TO BEGIN THEIR TENURE WITH A SHOWDOWN.
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